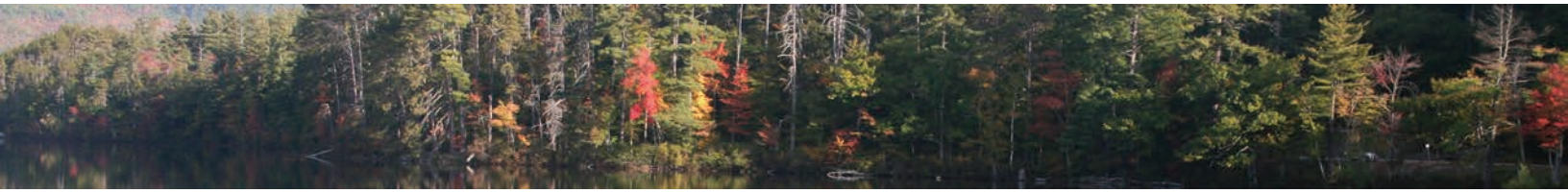

The Year in Forestry

State and Private Forestry in the Northeast and Midwest

Fiscal Year 2010

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Northeastern Area
State and Private Forestry
Newtown Square, PA 19073
NA–IN–01–11
October 2011

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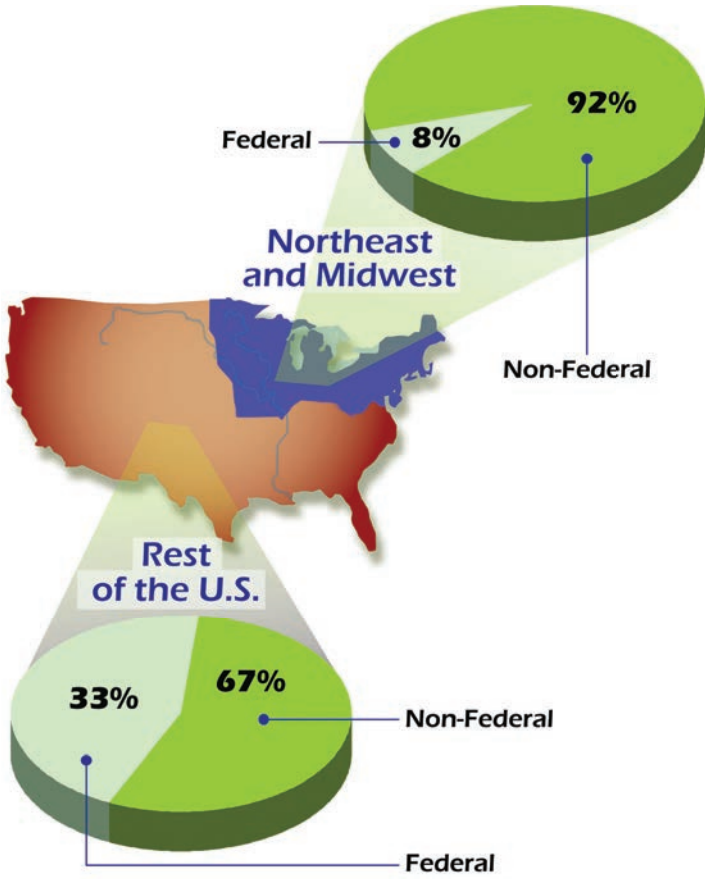
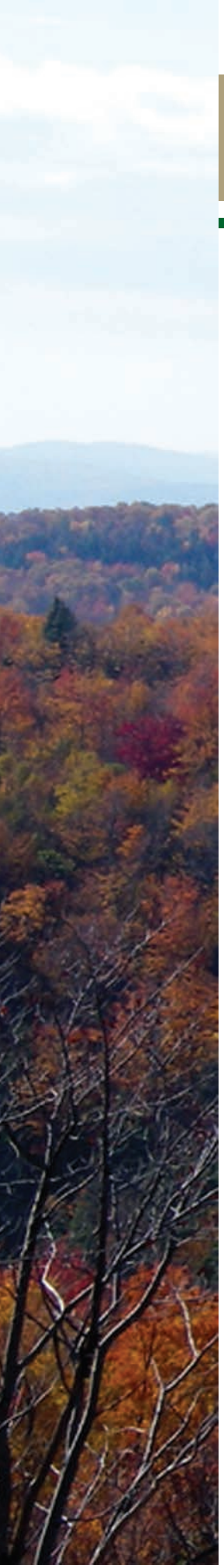
Introduction

The forested landscapes of the Northeast and Midwest, which stretch from the Mississippi River to the eastern seaboard, present one of the most unique natural resource management challenges in the country. Nowhere else in the Nation is the landscape so densely wooded and densely populated, which makes the connections between healthy people and healthy forests heavily intertwined in this region. Trees and forests improve our quality of life and provide us with clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, and healthy places to live and exercise. Trees need to be protected from threats such as wildfire, unnecessary development, and insects and diseases so they can continue to provide these benefits.

With more than 170 million acres of forest, the 20 States of the Northeast and Midwest collectively have the highest percentage of forested land in the country. This region is also the most heavily populated—more than 123 million residents live in these 20 States and the District of Columbia. Compounding the complexity, a large portion of the land base in this region is privately owned and managed in a variety of ways. In addition, the acreage owned by each person varies broadly, resulting in a forest land base that is owned by many more individuals than anywhere else in the country. It is critical to provide information and assistance across this checkerboard of landownership to protect the important benefits that these forests provide.

The 20 States in the Northeast and Midwest and the District of Columbia contain 43 percent of the Nation's population and 25 percent of the Nation's forests, of which 92 percent are non-Federally owned.





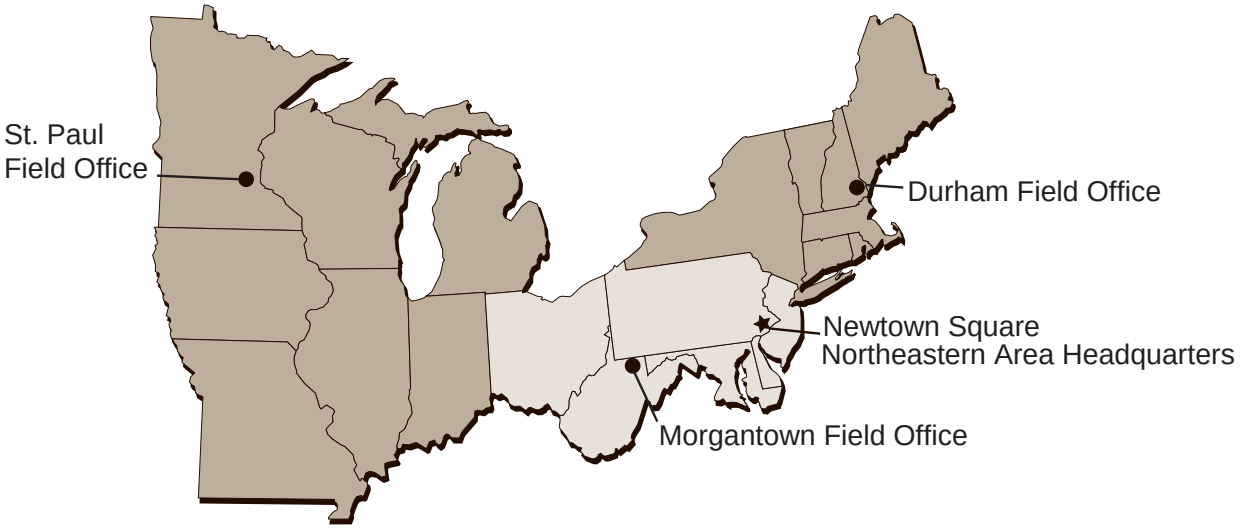
Working Collaboratively Across All Lands

The U.S. Forest Service is best known for its role in managing the 193 million acres of National forests and grasslands. Non-Federal forest lands, which make up 92 percent of the forest cover in the Northeast and Midwest, are important to people and provide significant public benefits. Healthy trees and forests play an important role in providing clean air and water, a place for wildlife to live, and a source of well-paying jobs. The Forest Service, its partners, and the region's residents are essential to maintaining the health and vitality of this non-Federal forest resource.

In the Northeast and Midwest, the Forest Service has a unique unit—Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry (NA S&PF)—whose mission is to work across State and other political jurisdictions to sustain forest benefits for future generations. NA S&PF accomplishes this through a variety of programs and partnerships designed to improve the health and vitality of trees and forests, regardless of ownership.

NA S&PF has a small staff and a big mission. It employs 135 permanent, full-time people. The majority report to one of four locations: Newtown Square, PA; St. Paul, MN; Morgantown, WV; and Durham, NH. NA S&PF employees are experts in entomology, forest pathology, wildfire prevention and management, urban forestry, conservation easements, silviculture, forest products markets, woody biomass, ecology, hydrology, GIS, communications, conservation education, database design, and grants management.

NA S&PF works with State forestry agencies and other partners to deliver financial and technical assistance on the ground. Its suite of programs—urban and community forestry, forest stewardship, forest health, forest legacy, watershed restoration, conservation education, wildfire prevention and protection, and technology transfer for wood-related industries—is flexible enough to respond to the highest priorities while at the same time maximize Federal investments through matching contributions. Participation in NA S&PF programs is inclusive and entirely voluntary.



State Forest Action Plans

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, also known as the 2008 U.S. Farm Bill, changed forestry in America. The bill set into motion landmark changes in the way trees and forests will be managed, conserved, and enjoyed into the future. Honing in on the State and Private Forestry programs of the U.S. Forest Service and its long history of cooperation with State forestry agencies, the law requires that each State complete a Statewide Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy, now known as a Forest Action Plan. The assessment portion provides an analysis of forest conditions and trends in the State and identifies priority landscapes and issues for future focus. The strategy portion provides long-term plans for investing State, Federal, and other resources where they can most effectively stimulate or leverage desired actions and engage multiple partners.

In 2010, NA S&PF played a key role in helping each of the 20 States and the District of Columbia develop its Forest Action Plan. These documents, which were developed with public input, ensure that Federal and State programs target shared management priorities and achieve meaningful outcomes.

The most common issues and goals that States across the Northeast and Midwest, as well as the District of Columbia, identified as important include these:

- Keeping forests as forests
- Forest ecosystem health and sustainability
- Urban and community forest health and sustainability
- Water, biodiversity, recreation, and other ecosystem services
- Forest products industry and markets
- Sustainable forest management across all ownerships
- Climate change
- Wildfire threats to forests, public safety, and property
- State and private capacity for forestry
- Awareness of and support for forests

Forest Action Plans provide an unprecedented opportunity to work across jurisdictional boundaries and implement an "all lands" approach to forest sustainability.

The Stewardship Project

The Stewardship Project is an amazing story of cooperation and teamwork among Federal, State, university, and nonprofit partners. Together, NA S&PF and the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters (NAASF) have assembled some of the best minds and most committed individuals for the sole purpose of keeping forests as forests. The Stewardship Project's purpose is to develop tools, approaches, and strategies that will dramatically expand the influence and effectiveness of collective forest stewardship efforts over the next 10 years.

This enhanced dialogue and activity positions all organizations for more meaningful future outcomes as well as increased impact on the landscape. The Stewardship Project is directly in line with outcomes described in the President's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Stewardship Project accomplishments to date include:

- Developing the draft *Landscape Stewardship Guide* as well as its companion *Landscape Stewardship Quick Start Guide*. These two documents provide essential guidance on how to approach landscape-scale stewardship at the State level. A training module is in the planning stages.

- Conducting social marketing research to determine what messages will resonate with the public regarding community-based stewardship. The information gained will be incorporated into media training designed specifically so that State and Federal communication specialists can convey messages about forest stewardship and the forested environment in a way that resonates with more people.

- Drafting key outcomes and their measurements for the Stewardship Project, which are now being reviewed. These will provide a more accurate and compelling story of the importance of community-based stewardship.

- Preparing a draft white paper with policy recommendations on tax reform for NAASF consideration.

- Compiling examples of successful community engagement in forest stewardship.

- Developing a 1-year action plan to lay the groundwork for establishing productive and lasting corporate partnerships.

- Partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to explore approaches to creating a more seamless government. The goal is to have State and Federal agencies work together in a more collaborative and coordinated way, particularly when providing assistance to private landowners.

Community-based Stewardship: Urban and Community Forestry

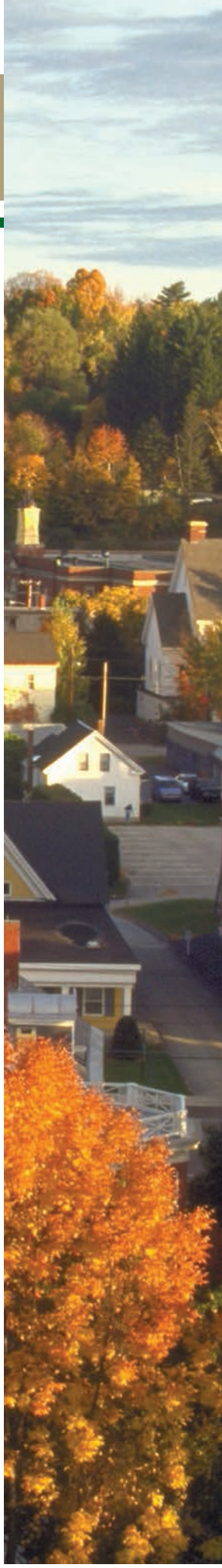
Urban and community forests occur in nearly all communities within the Northeast and Midwest, from the most urban to the very rural. In their Forest Action Plans, State forestry agencies placed emphasis on the benefits of trees and forests as green infrastructure that contributes to the quality of life in communities. Using an integrated approach, most States seek to protect existing tree cover; implement best management practices; and engage local officials and the public in planning, sustaining, and improving forest resources in and around cities, suburbs, and towns. NA S&PF provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to conserve and protect forests as well as sustain and expand the benefits provided by urban tree canopy in metropolitan areas and communities.

In 2010, NA S&PF completed a comprehensive Urban and Community Forestry Strategy that focuses the Federal role on sustaining and expanding urban tree canopy cover to achieve multiple public benefits. The strategy was used as the basis for dialogue with the Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters (NAASF), Region 9, and the Northern Research Station to initiate collaborative efforts in the future.

Another important role involves sustaining relationships with organizations that foster strong commitments to the local stewardship of urban and community forests. Selected priority NA S&PF actions include increasing cooperation with a broader array of State and Federal agencies in urban areas to leverage additional resources, promoting green infrastructure to mitigate stormwater runoff, creating green industry jobs, improving water quality, restoring the ecological function of urban watersheds, and increasing the connections between people and nature.

Restoring a National Treasure: The Chesapeake Bay Watershed

For the past 20 years, NA S&PF has worked tirelessly with a myriad of partners to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay. NA S&PF has focused on improving the health and vitality of the trees and forests of the region. Native forests are vital to improving the water quality and provide critical habitat for the 3,600 plants and animals that call the Chesapeake Bay home. Through targeted financial and technical assistance over the past year, NA S&PF's partners have restored over 6,900 miles of riparian forests, protected 143,500 acres of working forests, and helped over 80 communities increase their canopy cover by planting and caring for their community trees.



Providing Jobs in Rural Communities: The Wood Education and Resource Center

Forest-related businesses in the Northeast and Midwest are important to both local and State economies. These businesses rank in the top 10 in economic importance in every State in the region served by Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry except Rhode Island, where it ranks 12th. Almost one-fourth of all the wood volume produced in the United States comes from the region served by NA S&PF, and most of this wood volume comes from non-Federal forests.

American hardwood manufacturers are struggling to remain competitive in the face of global competition and high operating and energy costs. Wood industries find it hard to recruit, train, and hold on to skilled managers and employees.

The Forest Service's Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC) plays a critical role in keeping forest-related businesses in business. WERC promotes sustainable wood processing and woody biomass utilization across the 35-state eastern hardwood region. WERC offers highly sought after technical expertise, training, and information to businesses, States, and other partners about efficient wood processing, using pest-damaged timber, green building, and wood-based energy.

Last year, WERC facilitated the Forest Service investment of $1.4 million in 24 projects designed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the hardwood industry. These investments not only keep Americans employed, but they keep forests as forests. Forests that can continue to provide a stable source of income for future generations are less likely to be subdivided or sold off for other uses. In addition, WERC tirelessly pursues the use of wood as a renewable source of energy for heating and fuel. WERC employee Lew McCreery received the 2010 Secretary of Agriculture Honor Award for his collaborative work with the EPA and the Farm Services Agency to develop emissions guidelines that support the use of woody biomass for energy and heat.

Woody Biomass: An Abundant and Renewable Source of Energy for the Future

Woody biomass refers to the woody parts of trees and other plants, including branches, needles, and leaves. Sources of woody biomass include forests, rangelands, and urban tree waste. Biomass is usually the byproduct of forest stewardship and urban tree care activities such as reducing hazardous fuels, removing non-native as well as dead and dying trees, and conducting some forest restoration activities.

Developing and expanding the use of woody biomass as an energy source can support a healthier forest as well as reduce consumption of fossil fuels and other nonrenewable sources of energy. The Wood Education and Resource Center is currently assisting with 40 wood energy feasibility studies in 12 States. In addition, WERC is targeting assistance to a number of public and private facilities interested in converting their current heating systems from fossil fuels to wood. This includes six public schools in rural Missouri, two public schools in rural Pennsylvania, and eight facilities in the vicinity of Watertown, NY.

Protecting People and Forests from Wildfire

The State Fire Assistance program provides key financial and technical resources to States to reduce the dangers of wildfire to people and forests. The funding focuses on the critical need to prepare State firefighters and mitigate wildfire hazards. Firefighter preparedness includes firefighter training, fire planning, enhancing initial attack capability, and improving the mobilization of fire crews for efficient suppression and prevention of wildfires on all forest lands—public and private. Firefighter preparedness is important for keeping firefighters safe while at the same time increasing the efficiency of firefighter tactics. Hazard mitigation activities focus on creating safer communities by reducing hazardous fuels, developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and providing Firewise and other educational programming to communities.

In addition to helping States, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry provides assistance to rural community volunteer fire departments. Over 3,000 communities with populations of less than 10,000 received NA S&PF Volunteer Fire Assistance grants. The funds were used to purchase or refurbish more than $3.9 million worth of equipment and train close to 12,000 volunteer firefighters. In addition, NA S&PF helped organize six additional volunteer fire departments in rural communities.

Communities can acquire high-quality firefighting equipment at a low cost through the Department of Defense Firefighter Property and Federal Excess Personal Property programs administered by NA S&PF. In 2010, NA S&PF helped States transfer the ownership of more than $30 million worth of Department of Defense equipment to rural, mostly volunteer, fire departments. At the same time, communities across this geographic area received excess government equipment and converted it into $241 million worth of fire trucks and emergency response vehicles.

Keeping Forests Healthy

The Forest Health Protection program emphasizes protecting the long-term health and sustainability of forests. Its major responsibilities are to help States implement their forest health programs and provide forest health support on National forests and other Federal lands. Activities include identifying and evaluating insect and disease problems, providing resource materials and management recommendations for forests and nurseries, providing training in hazard tree management, and helping with major forest pest control projects.

Delaware Forest Service Exceeds Targets

Using an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant, the Delaware Forest Service exceeded its targets for reducing hazardous fuels and improving ecosystems. The State used the funds to develop 12 fire management plans, improve over 1,000 acres of important ecosystems, and reduce hazardous fuels on an additional 160 acres that benefitted six different communities. Delaware provided training and employment for the work crews throughout the grant project. One of the crew members has now secured permanent employment with the State.

The NA S&PF Forest Health program has outstanding expertise in entomology, forest pathology, and invasive plants. Its staff has played a key role in developing national as well as regional response plans to a variety of exotic pests, including Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, gypsy moth, and thousand cankers disease. These response plans are critical not only for protecting trees and forests, but for ensuring that these forests continue to provide clean air and filter water for future generations. These plans outline strategies for multiagency cooperation, intensive survey and early detection, tree and forest protection, and citizen involvement. Over the last 10 years, the Gypsy Moth Slow the Spread program alone is credited with preventing gypsy moths from infesting 80 million acres beyond present levels.

From Maine to Michigan: Keeping Forests as Forests in 2010

The Forest Legacy Program is a partnership between participating States and the U.S. Forest Service. These entities work together to identify important forest lands and protect them for future generations. Conservation easements are the primary tool used to achieve this goal. Priority is given to lands that have important scenic or recreational values; riparian areas; fish and wildlife values, including threatened and endangered species; or other ecological values.

All 20 States served by NA S&PF have voluntarily joined the Forest Legacy Program. In 2010, 104,887 acres of forest land in 11 States were protected from conversion to nonforest uses. Since 1993, almost 1.5 million acres of forest land across the 20 Northeast and Midwest States have been protected as working forests. These important forest lands have been valued at $478,835,000 and have been protected with a Federal investment of less than $227,000,000.

Important forest lands that were protected in 2010 include:

- Grafton Notch – Stowe Mountain, Maine – This 3,364-acre forest protects scenic views from the Appalachian Trail and the Grafton Notch State Park.
- Southern Monadnock Plateau, Massachusetts – This first of three phases will protect over 5,000 acres of forest in north-central Massachusetts that are critical to protecting the headwater streams of the Millers and Nashua Rivers.
- Northern Great Lakes Forest, Michigan – The final phase of a 247,803-acre working forest conservation easement project in Michigan's Upper Peninsula was completed that protects a diversity of natural resources, including Mitchell Lake.
- Ossipee Pine Barrens, New Hampshire – Completion of this five-tract, 2,320-acre project permanently protects some of the globally rare pitch pine-scrub oak barrens found in New Hampshire.
- Mission Society, New Jersey – This 1,134-acre project protects potable water resources, supports biodiversity, and allows extensive recreation within the New Jersey Highlands.
- Vinton Furnace Experimental Forest, Ohio – As a result of a multipartner effort, Ohio's largest remaining privately owned block of forest land will be permanently protected and provide the public with recreational opportunities, promote native wildlife, maintain ongoing forestry research, and support sustainable forestry activities.
- Tree Farm #1, Pennsylvania – This 1,466-acre property, now part of the Michaux State Forest, serves as a buffer to the Appalachian Trail corridor and lies within the viewshed of Gettysburg National Military Park.
- Harrington House Woodlands, Rhode Island – The State of Rhode Island acquired this important 69 acres of forested land in Exeter as a conservation easement for a working forest.
- Chittenden County Uplands, Vermont – This final tract links existing protected lands in the area such as Camel's Hump State Park, Mount Mansfield State Forest, and the Ethan Allen Firing Range while at the same time protecting private forest acres in the most populated county in Vermont.
- Potomac River Hills, West Virginia – This working forest conservation easement protects over 2,500 acres that contain over 10 million board feet of sawtimber.
- South Branch, West Virginia – This 144-acre conservation easement will allow the landowners to continue to manage the property for forest products according to their State Forester-approved Forest Stewardship Plan while at the same time protecting the property in perpetuity.
- Tomahawk Timberlands, Wisconsin – This final phase of this project protects over 7 miles of scenic river frontage along the Tomahawk River as well as a significant portion of the river corridor from the Willow Flowage to Lake Nokomis.

Protecting the Great Lakes

In 2010, as part of the multiagency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, NA S&PF awarded close to $7 million to protect and restore the Great Lakes. States, Tribes, and communities are now working on a variety of projects that include planting trees lost to emerald ash borer, improving wildlife habitat, restoring brownfields, developing ecosystem markets, and controlling invasive plants.

Taking a Wider View: Regional Perspectives

Highlands Regional Study Update

This year, NA S&PF released the Highlands Regional Study: Connecticut and Pennsylvania 2010 Update*. The* 2010 Update *identifies areas of high conservation value, the impact of land use change on natural resources, and conservation strategies in the Connecticut and Pennsylvania portions of the Connecticut-New York-New Jersey-Pennsylvania Highlands Region.*

In 2002, the Forest Service published final findings and conservation goals for the Highlands Region States of New Jersey and New York in its New York-New Jersey Highlands Regional Study: 2002 Update*. The Highlands Conservation Act of 2004 directed the Forest Service to expand this document so that it included Connecticut and Pennsylvania. The* 2010 Update *is the final publication from the four-state Highlands regional study. Similar assessment and public input methods were used for all four States, which ensured consistent results across the Highlands. The* 2010 Update *creates a seamless natural resource and growth and impact analysis of the entire 3.5-million-acre region.*

The conservation goals identified in the 2002 document for New York and New Jersey were carried through to the 2010 Update*:*

1. *Manage future growth that is compatible with the region's ecological constraints*
2. *Maintain an adequate surface and ground water supply that meets the needs of local and downstream users*
3. *Conserve contiguous forests using management practices that are consistent with private property rights and regional resources*

Upper Mississippi Forest Partnership

Since 2006, NA S&PF has made a concerted effort to engage people and organizations in restoring bottomland forests to improve water quality and migratory bird habitat in the Upper Mississippi watershed. In 2010, NA S&PF invested in projects that will reforest critical bottomland hardwoods along the Upper Iowa, Turkey, and Yellow River watersheds as well as restore woodlands within the Stephens State Bird Conservation Area in Iowa. Additional investments were made to improve riparian forests in the rapidly growing Four Corners area of Aitkin County as well as the Rum River watershed in Minnesota. Forty acres of the important forested Chache River in Illinois have been protected in perpetuity. These are just a few of the examples of projects underway all along the Upper Mississippi that cumulatively make a difference not only for the people who use and enjoy the Mississippi River every day, but for all who benefit from the vegetables, fruits, and other crops that are grown in the region.

A major subbasin of the Mississippi River Basin, the Upper Mississippi River Basin extends 800 miles from northern Minnesota to the confluence with the Ohio River at the southern tip of Illinois

Keeping Forests Working for You

The U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry has a proud tradition of caring for all lands and serving all people. Its completely voluntary programs are designed to keep forests and trees as healthy as possible so they can provide clean air, clean water, and beautiful places now and into the future. For more information about Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry and its programs, visit http://na.fs.fed.us.